

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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words, one of them, applying a forceps to my 302
chin, wanted to give me palpable demonstration
of the truth. It was with difficulty that I ex-
tricated myself from the hands of the unlucky
shaver, choosing rather to believe than groan.

The Abipones bear the pain inflicted by the 302
old woman with the forceps, without complain- 832
ing, that their faces may be smooth and clear;
for they cannot endure them to be rough and
hairy. For this reason, neither sex will suffer
the hairs, with which our eyes are naturally
fortified, but have their eye-brows and eye-
lashes continually plucked up. This naked-
ness of the eyes, though it disfigures the hand-
somest face in a high degree, they deem in-
dispensable to beauty. They ridicule and [86]
despise the Europeans for the thick brows 826
which overshadow their eyes, and call them
brothers to the ostriches, who have very thick
eye-brows. They imagine that the sight of
the eye is deadened, and shaded by the ad-
jacent hairs. Whenever they go out to seek
honey, and return empty-handed, their constant
excuse is, that their eye-brows and eye-lashes
have grown, and prevented them from seeing
the bees which conduct them to the hives.
From the beard, let us proceed to the hair of
the head.

All the Abipones have thick, raven-black 302

o narrow limits as to render them incapable of knowing, or at least suspecting the existence of a God, the creator and governour of all things, from the sight of the things created. The
 776 nation of the Guaranies, though formerly very ferocious, knew the supreme Deity, whom they call *Tupá*, a word composed of two particles, *tá*, a word of admiration, and *pá*, of interrogation.

o I said that the Abipones were commendable for their wit and strength of mind; but, ashamed of my too hasty praise, I retract my words, and pronounce them fools, idiots, and madmen. Lo! this is the proof of their insanity!

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 776 They are unacquainted with God, and with the very name of God, yet affectionately salute the evil spirit, whom they call *Aharaigichi*, or *Que-evét*, with the title of grandfather, *Groaperikie*.

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 186 Him they declare to be their grandfather, and that of the Spaniards, but with this difference, that to the latter he gives gold and silver, and fine clothes, but that to them he transmits valour; for they account themselves more courageous and intrepid than any of the Spaniards. Should you ask them what their grandfather formerly was, and of what condition, they will confess themselves utterly ignorant on the subject. If you persist in your interrogations, they will declare this grandfather of theirs to have been an Indian—so barren and absurd is their theodogy.

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[186] cealed. The Abipones, when I asked them their opinion of the Mbayas, said they thought them like dogs, because they were as impudent. My companions too, who dwelt amongst them, complained much to me of their shamelessness and public indecencies. The women, however, of both nations wear that degree of clothing which modesty requires. In the woods called ^{ODO} Mbaeverà, or Mborebiretà, the country of the antas, I found the men clothed up to the middle with a thin veil, and naked every where else; but the female Indians are decently clothed from the shoulders to the heels, with a white cloth which they weave themselves. I observed the same amongst the wood-Indians who wander on the shores of the Tapiraguaỹ and the Yeyuy, crowds of whom were brought by the Jesuits to the new colony of St. Stanislaus. An old Indian woman and her daughter fifteen years of age, whom I found in the woods betwixt the rivers Mondañ and Empalado, wore nothing but a net woven of the hemp caraquatà, in which they slept at night, so that the same dress, which was certainly too transparent, served them both for bed and clothing.

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291 I can truly say of the Abipones, that whilst they were in a state of barbarism, and roamed up and down like brutes, they were all decently, and, in their fashion, elegantly clothed. They

648 along with many others. Of what death, or in what place Caëperlahachin died, I am still ignorant.

727 The liberty of wandering at will, the abundant supply of food and clothing, the multitude of horses, the power of being as idle and profligate as they chose, and the completest impunity, where neither law nor censure is to be apprehended, bind the Spanish captives to the Abipones with so sweet a chain, that they prefer their captivity to freedom, forgetful of their relations and their country, where they know that they must live in obedience to the laws, and labour daily, unless they choose to endure stripes and hunger. I have known captives of so bad a disposition that their masters were glad to get rid of them without ransom. In many of the captives you would look in vain for the least trace of a Christian, or even of a man. Very few of the Abipones have many wives at a time, though they account polygamy lawful; the captives, seldom content with one, marry as many Spanish or Indian captives as they can. For the Abiponian women scorn to marry either Spaniards, or Indians of any other nation, unless, by the splendour of their achievements, namely, slaughters and rapine, they be reputed Abipones in nobility. The men too, accounting themselves

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more noble than any other nation, never deign [189] •
 to marry the Spanish captives, much less to 582
 have any clandestine intercourse with them: 727
 so that their virtue would be safer in captivity
 amongst the savages, than in freedom amongst
 their own countrymen, could they escape the se-
 ductive arts of their fellow captives. In confes-
 sion, I found most of the female Spaniards, after
 a very long captivity amongst the Abipones,
 guilty of no trespass upon the laws of chastity.
 They all agreed in confessing that no woman
 need go astray amongst these savages, unless
 she herself chose it. I can say as much for
 the continence of the young men, who had been
 long captives amongst them.

The gentle reader will pardon this digression 574
 concerning captives, if indeed it be a digression, 648
 because it does much towards establishing a
 good opinion of the chastity and benevolence
 of the Abipones, which form the subject of the
 present chapter, and will be further confirmed
 by additional arguments. They hospitably en-
 tertain Spaniards of the lower order, Negroes
 or Christian Indians, who have run away from
 their masters, lost their way, or, by some other
 means, chanced to enter the hordes of the Abi-
 pones, and, in the most friendly manner, offer
 them food or any thing else they may stand in
 need of; this they do the more cordially the

764 mentations. What, if we say that many of the Abipones are buried because they are thought dead, but that in reality they die, because they are buried? It is not unlikely that these poor wretches are suffocated, either by the hide with which they are bound, or by the earth which is heaped over them. But as they pull out the heart and tongue of the deceased, it cannot be doubted that they are dead when they are buried; though I strongly suspect that the heart is sometimes cut out when they are half alive, and would perhaps revive were they not prematurely deprived of this necessary instrument of life. The savages, who hasten the burying of their dead so much, presumed to censure us for keeping the Christian Indians out of their graves many hours after their decease.

The Abipones think it a great happiness to be buried in a wood under the shade of trees, and grieve for the fate of those that are interred in a chapel, calling them captives of the Father. 767 In the dread of such sepulture, they at first shunned baptism. They dig a very shallow pit to place the body in, that it may not be pressed by too great a weight of earth heaped over it. They fill the surface of the grave with thorny boughs, to keep off tigers, which delight in carcasses. On the top of the sepul-

726 are unwilling, by a doubtful contest, to experience a change of fortune, and to undergo a new danger. A spear, or garment, taken from them in battle by their enemies, the Abipones consider a terrible disgrace to their nation, regarding the loss of it with as much grief as Europeans do that of their drums or standards.

756 The Abipones never attribute victories, and the
 741 fortunate events of battles, to their own skill,
 186 but to the arts of their jugglers. Although they hold the other Paraguayrian nations in contempt, yet they allow the Guaycurús to be formidable; they say that they are cut down like funguses by the spears of these savages, not because they excel them in goodness of arms, strength of body, or courage of mind, but because they enter the fight attended by far more skilful jugglers. The Cacique Alaykin affirmed to me, that persons blown upon by their breath fell to the ground, as if struck with thunder.

727 But now let us contemplate the Abipones triumphing after a successful fight. If the event has answered to their wishes they fill the country with joyful rumours of victory, and generally exaggerated accounts of the slaughter of the enemy. They who have behaved with distinguished valour have the ears and eyes of all directed towards them. They who have re-